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T O T H E

R E P R E S E N T A T I V E S

I N P A R L I A M E N T,

U P O N T H E

S T A T E O F T H E N A T I O N.

The dispute between Privilege and Prerogative may easily be composed by laws, by vote, by conferences and concessions, where there is a tolerable temper, or prudence on both sides, or on either side. Among contending *titles* the question can only be determined by the sword, by devastation, and by civil war.

HUME's Essay XV. Vol. I. p. 510.

For my part I shall always be more fond of promoting moderation than zeal; though perhaps the surest way of producing moderation in every party, *is to increase our zeal for the public.*

HUME's Essay III. Vol. I. p. 24.

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M D C C L X X I X.



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## ADDRESS, &c.

**T**HE silence with which you are permitted to assemble at this very critical juncture, You may with more reason impute to the imbecillity of administration, and the distraction of their councils, than to the integrity of their intentions, a respect to your independence, or to the want of an hireling to execute their purpose.

The last Sessions of Parliament was opened under a scourge of ironical ridicule, too thinly veiled for the concealment of its authors, or intention; And yet whilst the sneer arose, and was encouraged from that part of the house which dared avow the purpose of repressing public debate, and of discountenancing those who had always acted honestly, and wished then to speak with freedom; Judicious men would not commend or join in it: and even those whom a flow of spirits, or the poignancy of the satire had united in the general laugh, felt upon reflection a serious and deep regret, that they might, by their indiscretion, have assisted a scheme, fatal to the freedom of debate in parliament, and therefore dan-

gerous to the security of every individual in the kingdom. The design was deep, the contrivance artful—and seemed to form a part of that system which may be traced in the writings, the public conduct, and the declared opinions of the ministers, and of those who have devoted their abilities and exertions to their service.

They had failed in an open and direct attack upon the privilege of electors; the freedom of the press; and the birthright of the subjects of the British empire; the names of Constitution—of Freemen—and of Patriot were still to be read in every dictionary, and daringly misinterpreted *in one only*\*! But that work was not in the hands of every subject, nor was the authority of the comment conclusive upon those who read it.

The Whig was not yet separated from the interest of the family upon the throne, nor from the principles which placed them upon it; nor had the Tories yet condescended to write a panegyric upon any British monarch of the present century†.

It was necessary for an administration, which had determined upon the destruction of public principles, and the confusion of liberty and power, under such circumstances, to change their mode of attack, which had been hitherto ineffectual: The spirit of the country was not broken, and the exertions of individuals in the cause of constitutional independence and liberty were still rewarded with public gratitude, and were ranked amongst the virtues of a good citizen.

Whilst this encouragement remained—whilst the confidence of the people was firm in those who had persevered in the public cause, and had suf-

\* Johnson's Dictionary. † False Alarm, p. 54 and 57.  
ferred



ferred greatly for it—it was vain for administration to expect a completion of their system.

Two expedients presented themselves: to make patriotism and public services contemptible in the eyes of the people; or to persuade them, that the profession of these virtues by their protectors and their favourites, was from motives of private advantage, or personal enmity: that the patriot of this day would be the tyrant of to-morrow, and that All were united in the approbation and pursuit of one arbitrary system of power.

But they knew, that the minds of the people were not yet prepared to treat Patriotism with ridicule and contempt. The boldest adherents to their arbitrary system hesitated to comment upon such a text thus barely stated, without some preparatory and probable grounds of supporting such a proposition; And it was easy for them to foretel the consequences of a successful attack upon the conduct and character of those men, to whom the people directed themselves upon all public occasions for comfort and support, and whom, upon tried experience, they had approved as their patrons, and the guardians of their liberty and lives.

If then, by scattering seeds of diffidence and mistrust, the administration could induce the people, but for a time, to withhold their countenance from them, who by their meritortious services were in full possession of it; the consequence of such suspense appeared certain, That the contempt of the patriot would counteract the effect of his services; and the proffered advantage and security would be rejected by the people, because the hand presenting them was become suspected.

These were the suggestions, and the grounds of  
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the system, which they have adopted. To make ridicule the test of truth—to deny the existence of political principle—to adjust the measure of right and wrong by the fluctuating scale of opinion, or by the specious necessity of the times—to quicken the jealousy of a free people against their patrons and protectors, by suggestions as base as they are ill founded; That self-interest is the universal passion, that public virtue and ambitious tyranny spring from the *same* source, and that to be eminently virtuous in the public line of life is only *to be little known*.

Under the influence of corruption the minds of the people and of serious men have been poisoned by such false aspersions; and to confirm these positions by a specious semblance of truth, as if All mankind had in all times thought, reasoned, and acted upon similar motives; public offices, foreign courts and countries, the repositories of private families, and even the palace at Kensington, have been ransacked for papers, correspondence, and documents, which have been applied to this purpose of convincing mankind, that all public conduct is directed by other motives than those of the public service—that the orator in parliament is a hireling—that the general in the field fights only to enrich himself—that Russel was a traitor to his blood; and Sydney to his country.

The examples of former times act very forcibly upon the imagination and conduct of those who read and hear of them. The fate of Laud and Strafford had deterred ministers (whatever might be their inclinations) from *excess* of corruption and political treachery. The sufferings of Sydney and of Russel had stamped a virtue upon patriotism which tyranny could not shake, and which grew under

under oppression. It was left to the wretched compilers of modern times, under the immediate countenance of administration, to unite the treason of selling and enslaving a country with the hypocrisy of Charles I. and after having imagined such a character, to give to it the name of Sydney. But their intent was obvious, That by destroying this pattern of true patriotism, they might turn the people from the admiration of it in any other form.

They have exercised the same licentious freedom upon examples, and men more nearly connected with the present period.

The Revolution, and the protectors of it; the Whigs, and the friends to the bill of succession; have been traduced in mangled and manufactured collections of papers, which, if strictly and literally genuine, could be of little authority. Definitions have been called in to support this darling system\*; and the author of these Definitions, in a pamphlet published under the immediate inspection and countenance of the Court, has audaciously asserted, "That there has not been a monarch of Great Britain *for almost a century*, except the present, who has appeared to *desire* or *deserve* the affections of his people†."

A laboured attack upon the character of a patriot was next attempted by this favorite author of government. The object was the same, but more openly declared: it is a pointed satire against those who were at the period of its publication high in the esteem of the people for great and public services: and when he wishes, at least for form's

\* Johnson's Dictionary.

† False Alarm, p. 54. published 1770.

sake, to suppose the existence of such a man as a true patriot, he attempts in vain to express himself, acquiescing and well satisfied with his proof of the negative—*that he knew not one*\*!

To quote and expose the scurrilous and exceptionable passages which have appeared in the several political publications of this author would be a tedious and invidious task—But I cannot help applying one of his own sentences to the circumstances and style of himself and of his party, as peculiarly descriptive of them; and then I take my leave of him for ever.

“ Among the disturbers of our quiet are some  
“ animals of greater bulk, whom the power of  
“ roaring persuaded us to think formidable, but  
“ we now perceive that sound and force do not  
“ always go together—The noise of a savage  
“ proves nothing but his hunger†.”

It is from the adoption and prevalence of the principles and doctrine, and from the insinuations of such authors, that the British nation have been almost brought to avow corruption, and to adopt it as a necessary and active spring in the several motions of government.—The excess of it is perhaps even *now* punishable; but when the principle is once acquiesced in, the measure of its agency must be determined by opinion—by necessity—by the circumstances of the persons, and the habits of the times; and what in 1779 may be excessive, and therefore to be reprobated in an *elector* of Great Britain, may, perhaps, in 1780, be pardonable in a *first minister of the country*!

\* “Patriot” published in 1774, at the eve of the general election.

† Falkland’s Islands, p. 141, last edition.



The depravity which has attended this corruption is not confined to the public walk of life; the lower classes hope to find a refuge, and boldly seek it, where they should have met their punishment—in the practice and hearts of their legislators. In this they are countenanced by the ill-judged aspersions upon those characters whom they had been taught to revere; and whilst the people seek a justification for their vices in the example of these their favourites, they are deprived of the advantages which would otherwise have resulted to them, from the imitation of their virtues. After having effected a complete dissolution of the virtuous compact between the several orders of men in this country, the administration have directed their last effort against the aggregate and collected virtue of the State, by stigmatizing with ridicule and low satire, the members of the legislature assembled in parliament, and engaged there in the actual performance of their duty.

The object of these sheets was to point out to you, in order, the steps by which the governing men of this country have of late corrupted your domestic and internal policy. As the legislators of a country You are interested very nearly in the sentiments and opinions of those for whom you are deputed to frame laws:—as fellow subjects you must feel for that large uninstructed and credulous part of the nation, who catch their ideas from those who govern them, and which direct themselves by opinions formed out of the ideas thus furnished to them: and as you are the judges of right and wrong, as far as relates to the rules of government, and of the constitution, whilst you are a deputed part of the legislation, it is incumbent upon you to watch the opinions of

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those who govern, that they are not inconsistent with the principles of a free government, nor adverse to the principles and spirit of a free people.

As the guardians of their liberties, and the legal assertors of their claims, you will fulfil your duty most effectually by being chastely uncorrupt; and although an error in judgment, considered as the source of partial evil, may seem to be equally a breach of your duty, yet such errors are common to every state, and the legislature of every country has provided a remedy against the fallibility of the persons who compose it. By such errors the legislature is not ultimately endangered, if the *power*, which is deputed to each of you severally, as a part of the legislature, continues the same, and in those hands to which it has been deputed. But a surrender or a transfer of that power, or of the independent exercise of it, into the hands of another, for whom the legislature never designed it, is the danger which results immediately from corruption, and saps the foundation of the state.

If then, upon your assembling at the present conjuncture, impressed with a full sense of those duties, You shall find the governors of this country such as I have represented them; if, at your entrance into the house, you feel an unusual restraint and palpitation, lest your gait should be mimicked, your voice imitated, your actions caricatured, your person ridiculed, and the sentiments of an honest heart misinterpreted and traduced by scurrilous parody; will not the dignity of the assembly in which you take your seat, of the character with which you are invested; and will not the interest of all those honest men, who have with confidence entrusted you with the fullest powers of representation in that assembly, call upon

upon you, with an energy stronger than words can speak, to stem this profligacy of system, to drag forth, and to impeach the authors, abettors, and the approvers of it; and to rouse an infatuated nation from a lethargy, which credulity and a corrupt acquiescence have produced and fixed upon them?

In this temper of mind it will be more easy to enter into the state of the nation with spirit and impartiality; and when the plausible coverings are removed, which artful misrepresentation and audacious falsehood had cast upon the characters of those persons, with whom it is your duty to act, and upon those Countries in gross, for whose interest you are bound to provide; you will find nothing in the sound of America to irritate or rouse your passions, nothing in the name of Ireland to alarm your fears. Prepared to distinguish and to measure right and wrong by a scale of uniform and approved principle, neither the alluring and specious covering of a necessitous minister, nor the resentment of a disappointed placeman, will mislead or overbear you. You will find political objects of very extensive magnitude and importance for your consideration; and you will, in every part of the house (when you have cleared it of those betrayers of public honesty, of national faith, and of private virtues—few, I hope, in number) find men of abilities and judgment equal to the consideration and adjustment of all the objects which are before you.

You will certainly find that the national honor and existence are at stake, under very heavy clouds of impending violence, and threatening you from almost every quarter of the globe. This also is the result of the incapacity, misconduct, and

abuse of power by some amongst you. If it were necessary to aggravate, or if it were not the purpose of this address during the present alarming crisis to conciliate, I could state at large the sources of these misfortunes, and how they are imputable to those now in power.

But I dismiss the subject of administration, upon the firmest assurance that a proper time will soon come for a serious investigation into their conduct; and although I disdain to anticipate their condemnation, *I shall make no apology for questioning their innocence.*

The principal objects of public concern, which will be very early in the sessions submitted to your deliberation, are, the war with France, Spain, and America—the state and requisitions of Ireland—and the security of the British empire in all its parts. It is true, I could add to these the confirmation and strengthening of our domestic liberty; but that is an internal and independent subject, full of minute detail, which may be better explained in a separate pamphlet.

It is not my intention to trace the progress of the war in which we are engaged up to its first source—the discontents in America, and the blocking up the port of Boston.

I do not mean to justify America, or to accuse Great Britain. But it would be still further from the duty of an Englishman to suppress the real condition in which, after a twelve years peace, the Parliament of Great Britain, upon inquiry and trial, have found the navy, our stores, and the bulwarks of our national security—or what administration has provided since our engaging in the war, and after a perseverance in it for five years—I state the facts as they are, not to hasten the vengeance which will find out and punish the authors



thors of our calamities—but that you may have a full and clear view of the truth, and be better able to advise what is necessary, what expedient, and to supply by your councils the gross deficiencies of our governors!

The war is with America, France, and Spain: the whole continent of America irritated and in arms—the fleets of France and Spain superior to that of Great Britain in America and the West Indies, and masters of the sea and of the British channel during the whole of this last summer—the armies of Spain directing a regular and firm attack against one of our most valuable possessions; and, as far as the honor of Great Britain is concerned, perhaps the first object of her external grandeur.—The armies of France embarking or embarked to over-run this island, to stir up and countenance insurrections in Ireland, or, to state the least of possible evils, to destroy our dock-yards and principal sea-ports in the channel.

To resist this collected force Great Britain is without an ally: the fleets are all fitted from these islands—the army from Britain—the sailors all British and Irish—the expence is alone the expence of these islands—the loss must be wholly British.

The regular professional army at a distance from this island, and thinly scattered in distant corners of the extensive continent of America, to awe, as it is termed, the Colonies into submission; but as the experience of five years has proved, to weaken our own power, to expose our distant possessions to insult and disgrace, without a hope that we could repel the insult or do away the disgrace.

Great Britain itself is newly clad in arms: every art has been used to recruit and to form a strong army for the defence of this island, and of our connections at home.

Bounties of an enormous value have tempted the manufacturer from his loom, the handicraftsmen from their tools and families, and have given a fatal stab to the true constitutional and political system of raising and disciplining troops in a free and commercial country. Posterity will feel the lavish necessity of this war, and may find it difficult to apply a sufficient remedy to the evil.

This is the present state of the contending powers: when you are called upon to grant your supplies for the succeeding year, You will recollect by what grants and by what expedients this prodigious armament has been brought to such bulk and power; and you will consider maturely, whether it is safe to prolong it, even if the resources of this country should be equal to such a scheme; and whether it may not be fatal to *increase* it.

Is it a trivial vote which confirms this military system for twelve months more, and which gives to the ministers of this country a discretionary power of using this great force against such parts of the empire, as to them appear to deserve or to want coercion? And yet, if you listen with the same patience, and receive with the same credulity, the professions of the men in power, you may perhaps unadvisedly be induced to subscribe with them to a war for another year.

The ministers may perhaps tell you that the East India Company will pay two millions, and that with such assistance no new tax will be necessary. But the contribution from the East India Company has no connection with the war. It is for a renewal of their charter, and must be given to you at all events: surely then a peace with America, the conciliation, and return of their affection to this country is a far more desirable object of purchase,

chafe, than the continuance of an unnecessary and unnatural war, aggravated by some circumstances of savage wantonness, which the blind fury of former civil wars have not produced.

A steady opposition to the continuance of a war, even in its simplest form, is upon many accounts justifiable: but when a war presents itself with such accumulated circumstances of danger, distress, and ignominy; where, at an early period of it, the resources of the country will hardly enable you to act upon the defensive, without the hazard of incurring the disgrace of flight and acknowledged inferiority, and in that particular part where Britain hitherto was reputed invulnerable; it becomes the duty of those who represent the people, to consider well the motives, and the hopes from such a war, before they impower and enable the government to prolong it. The inferiority I mean, is too notorious, and you will find upon a comparison of this with the resources and exertions of former wars, that the present unfavourable inequality arises from the impolitic disunion of the British empire: that America may almost at all times turn the scale between Great Britain and the house of Bourbon; and when you calculate the events and probable consequence of this war, you will find Great Britain and America to be the only sufferers, and perhaps Great Britain in the largest proportion.

You will be forced to admit *that both are losers*, and that the profits of such losses are the portion of France and Spain.

Will you then still contribute to *their* aggrandizement? Will you with an unnatural and cruel coldness sacrifice the most generous of both nations to the aspiring blood of the house of Bourbon?

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Will you be the dupes of a family who have heretofore bowed under your yoke, and to whose ambition this country, with the virtuous pride of freemen, and in the cause of freedom, have fixed the bounds? Will you present to them America in chains, that we may gratify our monarch and ourselves with the sight of a free people humbled? or shall we continue to pledge our existence, as a free and great people, against a petty contribution and imaginary revenue from the Western Continent, as if it were fit to be set in competition with *our stake*?

Will you by your vote confine a gallant army within the precincts of a narrow district, upon the mere pretence of a conquest, to the accomplishment of which their numbers do not enable them to advance; or will you hear with patience of thousands of your fellow subjects, parching in the sands of Georgia, overwhelmed in swamps, disgraced, retreating, and burying themselves under the cover of the first lines they can enter, to avoid a multiplied and overbearing destruction, whilst at the same instant the most valuable of your islands are sacrificed every month, through a deficiency of men to secure them from the insults and inroads of the most insignificant armaments?

Such is the state of your armaments against America, to the support and maintenance of which you will be expected to give your voice, without a possibility of improving their situation.

But you may effectually remove these very striking causes of discontent amongst your soldiers—of apprehension amongst your merchants—and of hazard and disgrace to the empire, by resisting sternly the continuance of the war with America; by testifying in open parliament, and by a decisive vote, that France and Spain are the *only enemies* known



known to the British Parliament—that America shall be free, and independent of Great Britain, and that the hearts of this people are always open to the just claims of a free nation; and that the British Parliament disavows the base attempt of governing by other laws, than by those of a free empire.

That you are ready to address the King to withdraw all his troops and arms from America, that the Americans may be assured of the faith and sincere intentions of this country.

Upon this declaration of their independence, and after the troops are withdrawn, and every hostility by sea and land suspended against them, if they will not immediately forgive the hasty and injudicious violence of preceding years; if they will still remember that we have besieged and burned their towns, ravaged their country, and destroyed the industry of their hands, and will therefore obstinately persist to encourage and countenance the enemies of the British empire—perhaps a strict and continued forbearance on our part from them and their property (except what the necessity of defence, and the honor of the British arms and flag should call for) a free admission of their ships into all our ports, a restitution of such of their property as is yet in our hands, and an actual renewal of commerce with them, might soften their animosity, and produce what our arms have in vain attempted—an union between the two countries;—They might and would probably catch at the terms offered;—They would feel and improve so greatly by the change, that the most adverse of the Americans would subscribe to the generous and profitable system proposed by us, and we might again

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be parts of the same empire, inheritors and preservers of true freedom.

But, to give a more favourable turn to this proposal, if they should *at first* accede to the terms; if they should accept Independence from our Commissioners, and feel with gratitude that the removal of our troops from their provinces, and our fleets from their coasts, had enabled them to act for themselves, to improve their country, to negotiate with credit, to trade freely, and to apply the profits of their industry and of their trade to their own advantage; and withall, that the British people, instead of enemies, were become the faithful guarantees of their independence and freedom.

With what spirit might we turn our arms against the house of Bourbon in the West Indies, in America, and at home! We might then give scope to the gallantry of our troops, by sending them to defend countries which are our own, which wish to continue under our government, and which only want the countenance of this country to drive the piratical and faithless D'Estaign with disgrace from their ports.

Objects for their conquest would open to them, assisted by America, and pushed forward by a spirited determination of giving circulation to the American paper, by putting them in possession of the Spanish main, or of settlements which would be the lasting fund of their credit, the scene would be totally changed; *the necessity of fighting*, the worst calamity which can befall a free and high-spirited people, would be removed; and we might again be the arbiters of a general peace.

This would be the result of an union, or of a peace with America. To mark the consequences which

which must attend our perseverance in *the war against America* does not come within the compass of my intention ; and would add no other force to the argument, than by proving our state to be desperate, if we proceed as we have done—the *necessity* and not the justice of peace would bind you to the acceptance of it.

Under a deep impression of the destructive effects of civil contest with America, your attention will be called towards a subject, in some of its circumstances bearing so near a resemblance to the original causes of dispute between Great Britain and the Colonies, that it will be unpardonable if you do not collect some useful hints from what has passed, which, when seriously considered, may decide upon the case now before you.

You are called upon by the Irish nation to give them a free trade—You are informed of this demand by the unanimous vote of the House of Commons in Ireland, the representatives of that people, who declare, that nothing short of a free trade will enable them to live as a free people, or to support their proper rank and place amongst the component parts of the British Empire.

It were to be wished, that previous to this proper and constitutional representation, speculative politicians had not stepped in to anticipate not only the claim of these our fellow subjects, but very largely and forcibly to insist upon *their right to it*, without any representation or any claim.

Arguments drawn from speculation serve very often to illustrate subjects in their nature far removed from the public or general notice of mankind. Speculation assists the investigation of principles, religious, moral, and political : but when speculation and abstract reasoning are applied to

the subject of practicable government, and attempt to substitute a new and untried system (however true it may be in its foundation and unexceptionable in its principles) into the place of that, which a long succession of ages has modelled, improved, and confirmed, it is much to be doubted, whether any society would profit by the change. The habits of men being formed upon practice, do not fit themselves so immediately and so aptly to the new system, as to do justice to the experiment, or to direct it to the true end and object of its introduction.

In the first establishment of every system of government there must be many defects, which time and experience will lessen, and have often removed. It is almost an axiom in politics, that a constitution can never be made perfect at its creation: the frequent alterations in men, the subject to which all governments must be adapted, call for alterations of a similar kind in the laws which are to direct them. But we are told, that the principles of a free government are always the same; and to this assertion we are referred for a full justification of the present claim.

The subject is not new—In the beginning of this century Mr. Molyneux, in an elaborate and very learned treatise, undertook to prove that Ireland had never subscribed to the superintendence or controul claimed by the British Parliament. He admitted the usage, although in some instances he attempted to explain away the acquiescence of Ireland upon other and independent grounds.

The author of the "Observations upon the doctrine laid down by Sir William Blackstone respecting the extent of the power of the British parliament, particularly with relation to Ireland," has



has considered this doctrine in its full extent, and has applied it to the several communities of which a free empire may be composed, and has deduced the following general principle: That in a free empire, such as the British, the several communities have a legislature of their own, absolutely independent of each other; and that the executive power, the Sovereign, is the only link of connection by which the several communities are united in one state.

That the practice in the several communities of the British empire, whether in America, or in Ireland, has not, at any period, been the fair result of this principle, must be acknowledged by the most sanguine patrons of this system: that Great Britain to confirm this principle must relinquish the exercise of a power which she has enjoyed for centuries, must also be admitted.

With the most sincere respect for the principles and opinions of the author of these observations, I cannot therefore help expressing my surprize, that *he* should so strenuously at this period *enforce* this principle, who had observed, in a northern country \*, the very fatal effects of discord between the several powers of a state; where, whilst each strove for the ascendant, in the instant, by an exertion, the boldest and best concerted that was ever exe-

\* *Sweden.*—The history of the late revolution there was published (as the author expresses himself) to apprise the people of Great Britain, and of other free countries, of the danger which may arise from too confident security in the principles and forms of their constitution: but it is more applicable in the present times to the dreadful consequences of a difference and contest between the several component parts of a state, or which is the same, between the several component members of an empire.

cuted by man, the king, without a blow, annihilated the contending powers, and fixed himself for ever absolute upon the throne.

The principle which this author lays down in his letter to Sir William Blackstone, and which he attempts with great ingenuity and force of argument to support, as far as it relates to the present circumstances of the British and Irish parliaments, if insisted upon, would very probably reduce the two countries to a situation not unlike that of the several States of Sweden before the revolution. But as it is not possible to suppose that there ever will be a monarch upon the British throne who would wish to improve such an advantage; I will only state the consequences which *might* result from the contest.

The two Parliaments contend, one for independence, the other for controul.

The King is admitted to be the supreme executive power in Ireland, as well as in Great Britain. If the Parliaments, who own him equally for their head, should carry their resentment and their exertions to the extent which the Nobility in Denmark\* did against the orders of the clergy and commonalty; or the Nobility and the States in Sweden, sometimes against their King, and at other times

\* This revolution, in which the nobility, clergy, and commonalty surrendered the government into the hands of Frederic III. was completed upon the 18th of October 1660, in the space of four days.—“ *Gerstoff*, a principal senator, was the only man (according to Moleworth) who dared open his mouth in the behalf of their expiring liberties; saying, that he hoped and trusted that his Majesty designed nothing but the good of his people, and not to govern them after the Turkish manner; but wished his Majesty’s successors might follow the example which his Majesty would

times against each other, why may we not apprehend the possibility of a similar event? A voluntary devolution, or a corrupt and splenetic acquiescence in the absolute empire of one, the common head and king of both, rather than that the Parliament of Great Britain could bear the contradiction of the Irish, or the Irish Parliament submit to the controul of the British.

It is painful to anticipate a danger of such formidable magnitude; but when we have the recent examples of Denmark and Sweden before us—whilst we are overwhelmed with disgrace, and almost by despair in a contest with another part of the empire upon questions originally of less importance, how can we refuse to bear testimony to the hazard of disputing upon speculative rights? and if we confess the hazard, how, without the imputation of extreme political folly, can we encourage the dispute? Nor would it be less absurd, where the established practice has been eminently advantageous to both nations, productive of riches and strength to the one, and of liberty, and the true ends of good government to the other; and where that liberty may be further and effectually secured, either by an alteration in the mode of asking or of granting, to contend, that this practice and establishment

“ would undoubtedly set them, and make use of the unlimited power for the good, and not the harm of his subjects.

“ Not one of the rest spoke a word, or seemed to murmur in the least at what was done; and it is observable, that among so many great men, who a few days before seemed to have spirits suitable to their birth and qualities, none had the courage, during these last three days, either by remonstrance, or by any other way, to oppose in any manner what was doing.”

Account of Denmark, p. 46.

must notwithstanding yield to the system of pure speculation, because it is impossible to continue free under any government which is not framed according to the nice adjustment of a philosophical politician.

It is for these reasons that I omit to touch *upon the right* of the British over the Irish Parliament; and it is upon the same that I would recommend to the political writer to consider what is deficient *in practice*, what *in practice may be amended*, rather than to hunt after an Utopian liberty or system; and by one stroke, careless of the event of it, to extirpate an establishment, sanctified in its usage at least by the experience and approbation of ages.

But it will remain for your consideration, to what extent you will participate the blessings of commerce with your loyal and brave fellow subjects of Ireland. Their demand is for a free trade; that their industry may be exerted under the direction and influence of their own interest; that their talents may be exercised upon subjects which are best suited to them, or which are more particularly within their reach and command; that the product of these exertions may be applied to their own benefit, in the manner which they shall judge the best; that they may learn, practise, improve, and have a free communication with you in the establishment of manufactures, in the improvement of the arts, and in extending the commercial connections of these islands to the most distant parts.

They ask only for the product of their own industry, and of their own talents; to be allowed, in common with strangers, to purchase a participation with you of the improvements which successive ages have made in the various articles of traffic and of commerce.

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The same industry which enabled the English manufacturer to produce his work complete, the same ingenuity and labour in refining upon the work are necessary to those who attempt a similar establishment in Ireland, unless they purchase the knowledge of the art; and then the terms of this participation, the price to be paid for it, is at the discretion of those who are in the possession and enjoyment of the manufactures, and of the improvements.

Where then is the injustice of this request? where is the alarm, or injury to the empire, or to this island? Is it a detriment to the empire, that its ports are become more numerous, its fleets more powerful, the people rich, and its political consequence raised in the great scale of empire? Does the increase of domestic industry lessen or promote the actual strength and riches of a nation? Does it contract or expand the benefits and extent of foreign commerce? or, may we not with great propriety apply to the several communities of an empire, what Mr. Hume says of the several members of a state: "The riches of the several members of a community contribute to encrease my riches, whatever profession I follow: they consume the produce of my industry, and afford me the produce of their own in return\*."

The arguments upon the several articles of trade must be left to your discussion, as the questions arise in the House of Commons. But the application from Ireland is, for a *free trade*, which does not seem to admit of partial exemptions; whether it will be prudent to attempt the limitation of a grant, evidently and materially beneficial to Ireland, and

but partially, if at all affecting the English trader, will very well deserve the attention of the British legislature.

By a liberal grant the question of right is inapplicable and at an end. It is the wish of Ireland to remain firmly united to the cause, and in the interests of Great Britain; and the emulation between the two Parliaments will only be, Which, by encouragements and rewards, can most effectually promote the true ends of commerce. To be rivals in industry is more congenial to the temper and high spirit of both nations, and more beneficial to the constitution and security of the empire, than to blot the page of history with examples of rebellious outrage and avenging punishment.

The advantages which must result from a liberal grant, whatever is the event of this war, or whatever relation America shall hereafter bear to these islands, will amply reward you for the generosity of your gift.

If America accedes to our proposals, she will again be our friend, and we shall have no reason to dread the alienation or wilful transfer of her commerce to other countries. If she should force herself into independence, and separate herself from us with inveteracy and a fixed hate, what an alluring object will be held out to her from the ports of Ireland as well as Great Britain; from the produce and materials for traffic, enlarged and improved by the co-operating industry and talents of the two nations, ready to be poured forth into her bosom at a price much below that of other markets.

Their inveteracy will yield to interest, and the apprehensions which were entertained of a fatal check to our commerce, will be changed into the fullest

fullest enjoyment of the first fruits of the trade and industry of that productive continent. Other advantages will arise from the establishment and improvement of manufactures and commerce in Ireland; Emigrations from that country, which have been always lamented, and if America had driven us from the continent during the present distressed and hopeless state of Ireland, would have been a very serious concern to that nation, and to the strength and defence of these islands, will be effectually prevented. Emigration is the last resource of the wretched: the meanest of the people are compelled only by the most pressing necessity to quit their native soil. Persecution has operated much to this end in some countries; Poverty and difference of religion has driven many from Ireland; but that difference in religion will be softened and melted down by a more easy communication, and by a joint interest in labour, in manufactures, and commerce; as in other countries merchants of every persuasion unite in mercantile partnerships and acquire an esteem for the persons of each other, unabated by the consideration that they worship their God with different ceremonials and prayers.

The Legislature has in vain attempted to unite the papist and protestant in Ireland in their civil interest, or in the common transactions of life: the papists have withstood the importunity of kindness, and have defied punishment. If the grant of a free trade can in the end conciliate and produce this confidence between them; if it can secure Ireland, whatever may be the flattering prospect and rising hopes of America, from a loss and emigration of its inhabitants (which in the present state of Ireland would unavoidably follow the removal of our troops from America) it must be matter of tri-



umph to every honest man who has voted for the grant, that he has softened the acrimony of religious dissensions, and has made their country a seat of happiness and of comfort to millions of poor and loyal subjects.

The opposition made in the two last sessions to the limited and reasonable demands of the Irish must raise a doubt in the minds of all men about the success of their present application.

But I trust, the real circumstances of the Irish nation were not *then known* to those gentlemen who thought it an *unnecessary* grant: and I also trust, that the several cities and towns of this island which pressed their opposition by a train of legal arguments, and a parade of council at your bar, as if the constitution or some points of *legal* importance had been in agitation, have been already satisfied that their fears were too hasty, and without foundation in fact.

If however the impolitic jealousy of trade should bring once more to your bar petitions against the grant proposed, it will be incumbent upon you, who sit in that house as supporters of the dignity of the empire, and as promoters of the general and essential interest of it in all its parts, not to gratify the feelings and the avarice of one or two corporations, or bodies of constituents, although you are invested with their right and represent them in parliament, at the expence of a principal member of the empire, and to the detriment and perhaps the ruin of a deserving and high spirited nation.

“ For if narrow and malignant politics should  
 “ meet with success, you will reduce all your  
 “ neighbouring nations to the same state of sloth  
 “ and ignorance that prevails in Morocco or the  
 “ coast



“ coast of Barbary. But what would be the consequence? They could send us no commodities; they could take none from us. Our domestic commerce itself would languish for want of emulation, instruction, and example; and we ourselves should soon fall into the same abject condition, to which we have reduced them\*.”

These are the thoughts which have occurred to me upon the requisition from the Irish nation.

The third article for your deliberation, which I hinted at in the opening of this letter, is, the security of the empire in all its parts. A reconciliation with America, the restoration of peace to the minds of the Irish, and a liberal grant to them of the free exercise of their talents and of their industry for their own benefit, will enable us to look forward with hope to the final settlement of so great an object, which must have its foundation in a general peace; disordered and convulsed as the empire now is in every part by the mismanagement of those to whose charge it has been entrusted.

I cannot however close this address to you without some remarks upon a pamphlet, intituled, “ A short History of the Opposition during the last Session of Parliament;” which by a specious advertisement, in the form of preface, promises to make a full discovery of the principal and real enemies to the dignity and peace of the British Empire. That the author of this pamphlet is able to discover and to point out, according to their degrees of guilt, those who come within such description, there is little doubt; but as he probably might involve himself or some of his nearest

\* Hume, Essay VI. Vol. I. p. 345.

friends in the consequence of such a confession, I could not expect to find it.

Under such an idea I began to read with diffidence, not suspecting that the conduct of a very respectable part of the representative and legislative body of this kingdom in matters of the most public nature, and quite recent in the memory of the nation, could be traduced by audacious falsehood and base misrepresentation.

But the object of the author discovers itself in the sixth page, where we are told, "that the unanimity and concert which their Sovereign requested for the support of the interest and honor of the nation, exist only in them (the Opposition) for the *ruin of the one*, and *the tarnishing of the other*." And again, p. 47. "That an opposition begun in ambition has degenerated through disappointment into a species of insanity, and that in attempting to ruin the ministry, *the party have given a fatal stab to the honor and interest of their country*."

Scurrilous and general invective never produce the effect expected: it cannot persuade, because it confounds reason by irritating the passions: it carries no terror with it when it issues from the pen of an anonymous pamphleteer; and it can leave no sting, when it is directed against characters of tried virtue and approved services to their country.

To you therefore without passion I shall appeal, and where the votes and public acts of the last sessions have not already confuted the charges produced, I shall suggest a plain answer—either by pointing out contradictions in the pamphlet itself, or by exposing the fallacy, by which alone the charges are supported,

To

To the principal, which seem to be contained in the two passages above quoted, every page of the votes of the last sessions produce a positive contradiction; I mean as to the consequences charged to have been brought about by opposition: for of motives, what man can speak of another with certainty? or who will be so unjust as to impute to a large number of men in the gross, the corruption or base intent of an individual who may be connected with them? The votes prove incontestably, that every motion for peace, conciliation, or upon the public measures of government, made by those who were considered as opposed to administration, were negatived, and therefore without effect.

And that, amongst the variety of bills and motions made by the administration, very few were not admitted and passed, one bill in particular excepted, which by the distraction of ministerial councils was rejected in the House of Lords.

“ If then the wishes of the Sovereign for the prosperity of his people have been in every instance crossed and disappointed; if the honor of the nation is tarnished, and if a fatal stab has been given to the interests of the country,” are we to impute it to the operation and consequences of those acts, bills, and councils, which for these ten years have directed and executed all things internally or externally in peace and in war? or are we to say implicitly, with the blundering author of the pamphlet, that motions, bills, and propositions, which when suggested were smothered in their birth, which never had any activity, nor could have any effect, for want of an actual, and even a legal existence, have yet *done all this evil*? By what mode



mode of reasoning can any man be conducted to such a conclusion?

If indeed we had been oppressed by the *parsimony* of a British Parliament in such an exigency; if the representatives of the people had with a niggard hand proportioned their grants of money and of arms to the exertions of preceding years, or to the expectations which with reason they could form from the capacity and activity of administration for the success of future campaigns; and a factious party had withstood and prevented *such necessary* supplies; against such an opposition the author of the pamphlet might have inveighed in terms best suited to the candour of his feelings and the purity of his style, and perhaps without contradiction.

But here the facts are notoriously otherwise, there is not a shadow for such an argument; every demand, every proposition, every necessity, real or imaginary, every luxury of political convenience, has been gratified to the full extent of ministerial expectation.

To the Sovereign, whose wishes the opposition are charged seditiously to have resisted, a very liberal grant for the discharge of an enormous debt, and an additional establishment of 100,000*l.* per annum, have been made with the express consent, and probably by the assistance of opposition; and as I *cannot suspect the writer to mean*, that the ruin of the honor and interests of the nation have been attempted, by giving to the Sovereign and to his ministers all they ask, and by encouraging them to ask more, I cannot assent to the proposition, that the opposition have attempted the ruin of either.

To these imputations therefore in the gross, I shall



shall in the gross answer, by a sentence from the pamphlet before me.

“ Assertions which carry along with them their own refutation, are not likely to make converts within, nor profelytes without doors \*.”

The next imputation, which, with a long comment, fills the principal part of this pamphlet, is, “ That the opposition, to excite mutiny in the army and navy, have *falsely asserted*, that government had employed no commander of an army, no admiral of a fleet, whom they had not disgraced †.” To prove, that the conduct of administration did not justify this assertion, he enumerates every commander who has returned from the service (except Lord Howe, whose services have not protected him from the censure of some of the *present* administration) and instead of stating the approbation which any one of them has met with, or the honors conferred upon them by the King, which might have raised doubts in the breast of impartial men of the candor of a party who could make such an assertion in contradiction to the truth and to notorious fact; he vilifies the conduct of these commanders; he raises suspicions which his employers have not dared to avow; and for fear that we should be at a loss for a motive in administration to persecute and disgrace those whom themselves had chosen and employed, he tells us, “ That the mismanagement and consequent want of success on every side of the war had convinced the nation, that there was an error in *planning at home*, or a defect in the execution abroad ‡.”—In plain terms, that the minister or the commander must be sacrificed: the

\* P. 10.

† P. 7.

P. 10.

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power

power was in the hands of the minister; therefore the General and Admiral are disgraced. As *the fact* could alone justify the assertion, we find convincing proof of it in every page of this pamphlet.

Even in the observations which this author makes upon the individual commanders, he seems unfortunate in the choice, or deceitful in the application of them. Perhaps the habit of misquoting and suppressing passages, which has been discovered in some other publications of the gentleman to whom this pamphlet has been attributed, might have tempted him in the comparison\* he makes between the return of G——l B——ne from Canada, and Terentius Varro from the fields of Cannæ, to forget, or not to read to the end of the book which records that event, where he would have found, that upon the return of Terentius Varro to Rome, “ Adeo magno animo civitas fuit  
 “ ut consuli ex tanta clade, cujus ipse causa maxi-  
 “ ma fuit redeunti *obviam itum frequenter* ab om-  
 “ nibus ordinibus sit, & *gratiæ actæ*, quod de re-  
 “ publicâ non desperasset; cui si *Carthaginensium*  
 “ *ductor* fuisset, *nihil recusandum supplicii foret* †.”

The English *nation* have expressed no emotions of resentment, no symptom of contempt against the general who returned from Canada; not a murmur has been *nationally* raised against his courage or his conduct. When he appeared in public, an anxious regard has been cast upon him from the public eye, as upon one whom misfortunes had tried, but had not broken: they with-held

\* P. 11. “ His enemies remarked, that he came from  
 “ America, where he had lost an army, with as much con-  
 “ fidence as Terentius Varro returned to Rome from the  
 “ fatal fields of Cannæ.”

† Livy, l. 22. edit. var. Elz. vol. 2. p. 222.

their approbation till his conduct received the sanction of a proper court, and they treat him at this instant with respectful distance; and whenever the unfortunate remnant of that army shall return to this country, I have not a doubt but the English nation will sanctify the example of the Romans after the battle of Cannæ, by receiving them with the most affectionate tenderness and a warm sense of gratitude for their service.

Where then is the difference between the two pictures, so fatally resembling each other in the line of misfortunes? The answer I give, is, in the treatment of the General and his gallant army. To whom then is it to be imputed that this national and characteristic dignity of a free and high spirited nation has been suppressed? To whom is it to be imputed that this brave General, upon his return to England, is excluded from the presence of his Sovereign, from the countenance of government, from every respect and attention due *before conviction* to the most guilty?

The government, who must have taken the lead in any national expression of gratitude to a General, when they saw him shattered with fatigue, overwhelmed with an honourable and delicate shame upon his entrance into the House of Commons to relate the misfortunes which under his immediate guidance had fallen upon the state; whilst he was labouring for utterance in behalf of those his brave fellow-soldiers, who were made captives by the convention, and in whose defence, in the midst of adverse arms, himself a captive, had boldly attacked and impeached one of the first officers of the enemy—The ministry (I say) who sent him out, who planned the scheme, and who, at the best, were under the same cloudy mist of guilt,

or of suspicion, should, in the name of themselves and of the nation, have supported him with their voice; they should have countenanced him at least with this assurance, that his gracious Sovereign did *not anticipate conviction*; that the nation thanked him for his manly and anxious attention to the captive army in America; and for his return to Great Britain, that the government might be instructed by him in what manner their captivity would be made easy, and their redemption from it obtained.

To this tender and delicate address from the minister, the generous English people would have added the tribute of their thanks, “*Quod de re publicâ non desperasset.*”

The reverse has happened; the General is disgraced unheard, the army languish without relief, and their hopes of promotion extinguished; for they have been superseded. Posterity, when they read the fate of these two armies, will conclude that the governors and the people of Rome were Romans; that the people of England were Englishmen, but that the administration *were of the blood of Carthage*.

I will not trouble you with the recapitulation of the several charges against the other commanders, pressed with indiscreet warmth by the author of this pamphlet (whose object was not to justify but to accuse) because having proved his state of the case in a principal instance to be false, contradicting, and self-destroying, his credit must fail in all the rest.

But before you can hope for a restoration of mutual confidence between your generals, your admirals, and your country, or for a congenial spirit in the men to execute what is commanded to them for the service of their country—*Delenda*

*est*



*est Carthago*;—for it is in consistent with freedom, with honor, and with greatness.

The very heavy imputations, “ that the Opposition, with a want of prudence as well as decency, *have tied* up the hands of their country in the hour of danger, have made the people timorous, have impeded the levies of men, or have dissuaded the people from a spirited exertion against the enemies of the state \*,” are confuted by what I have before said about the supplies and grants so liberally given to administration, and are contradicted expressly by the author in his 57th page, where he says of the nation, “ Instead of being depressed with a sense of danger, all ranks and degrees of men feel that elevation which threatened perils excite in generous minds: instead of looking forward to future disgraces or disasters, they reflect on the glory of former times. The posterity of those who conquered at Poitiers, Cressy, and Agincourt, and annexed France itself to the English crown, cannot form to themselves any fears from a French invasion; on the contrary, when they have sufficiently prepared for security at home, they will act offensively abroad, and carry back to the bosom of the enemy that terror which *he vainly hopes* to create.”

I have insisted more particularly upon the contents of this pamphlet, because I know that it has *been industriously spread about* during the recess of parliament, to confirm in the minds of the public the suspicions of misconduct in the generals and admirals who have been employed in the course of this war: the extent and fatal consequences of such an attempt the wisest man cannot foresee;

\* P. 4. & passim.

but every novice in the history of mankind must know, that to shake the confidence of an army in its general, or of a fleet in its admiral, or to turn the respect due to *them*, towards the ministers of a country who are sometimes in opposition to the interests of these commanders, must endanger the event of every action, whatever may be the proportion of the force they are engaged with.

But you will not forgive that author, who by falsehoods, fallacies, and invective vilifies the *honor of a nation* to protect *those* from punishment, who, with the fullest powers to crush rebellion, to prevent a war, to secure the country from loss and disgrace, have laid us prostrate at the foot of rebellion; have plunged us in the most dangerous and unequal war, without allies, with an inferiority at sea, which has almost brought the security of these islands into dispute.

When you have considered and disposed of the two material objects which have been mentioned in the beginning of this letter, America and Ireland, you will be at leisure to investigate the causes which have hurried us to this brink of ruin: and when you have discovered the movers or the promoters of them, with the same spirit which has given liberty and peace to a continent, and the participation of commercial benefits to your fellow subjects, you will execute that final act of justice, which will be a worthy accompaniment to such an exercise of your power, and which will be revered by a grateful posterity!

I have the honor to be,

with the truest respect,

Yours, &c.



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TO THE  
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THE LORDS OF THE  
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IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF  
THESE  
THE LORDS OF THE TREASURY  
HAVE CAUSED THESE  
TO BE SIGNED BY THEIR  
SEVERAL HANDS  
AND THE COMMON SEAL OF THE  
SAYED LORDS OF THE TREASURY  
TO BE HEREUNTO SET  
THE 10th DAY OF  
MAY 1791



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